Discovery: Who is the user?
Collect materials

Questionnaire

Develop a set of fixed-response questions that elicit facts that inform the design

Introduction

The goal of a questionnaire is to capture information from a relatively large number of people in a form that is easy to analyse and interpret. Questionnaires do not provide the same level of detail as face-to-face interviews, especially since you cannot probe for more information after a particular response. Nor are questionnaires practical for open-ended questions, not only because the responses are cumbersome to analyze but because people tend to avoid writing long answers (unless they want to complain about something). However a good questionnaire can give you useful feedback about relevant characteristics of the target audience, common behavior, or other facts relevan to the design.

What to do

Before you start, consider how you will collect the data and who you will recruit to answer your questionnaire. If you use simple, standard question formats, you can use free software to create and analyze your survey, such as *free on-line surveys* or *survey monkey*. (websites?) These are usually sufficient, but you can also pay a small amount to be able to create more elaborate questionnaires, with custom graphics, more elaborate or branching questions, and additional analysis of the results.

Preparation (before)

Think carefully about what you want to find out and from whom. Be aware that people may not interpret your questions in the way that you intended, nor are they always honest. Be especially cautious when asking people to interpret their own activity, since perceptions often differ greatly from independently recorded measures of that activity. Questionnaires are best when they are influenced by your interview or questionnaire data, and focus on a specific topic.

Procedure (during)

The design team should begin by brainstorming ideas for what you would like to know about your users, and then generate a number of possible questions. In the beginning, do not worry about the details of how to ask the question or if they overlap, just create a large set of questions.

Next, arrange the questions in order of importance: which will give you the information you most want to learn about? Then, think about how they might overlap with each other. For example, asking how often users perform a particular activity may overlap with their preferences for that activity. Your goal is to produce the smallest number of questions that will give you the most amount of information.

Goals
– Collect facts about user characteristics and behavior
– Collect data from a large number of users
– Limit analysis time

Workflow
Resources needed
none
Complementary techniques
marketing survey
Useful for
user profile

Contributors (who does it?)
– designers

Audience (who is it for?)
– design team
– stakeholders

Roles
– Moderator   Moderate the design session
– Scribe   Take notes

Paths / step
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Advanced	1/45
Small Project	1/36
Product	1/57

Credits
Carla Griggio, Story questionnaires

Trade-offs
Pro   Gets many answers from many users; easy to analyze and summarize results
Con   Most information is not very relevant to design problem; difficult to capture relevant details of interaction

Coaching
– Focus on getting facts relevant to your design, rather than general opinions.
– Start with directed, specific questions, end with open-ended questions.
– Make each question count, the fewer questions the better.

Did you:

Make your questionnaire as short as possible. People quickly get bored answering questions and often simply stop. (Consider this when you think about the order of your questions – the questions at the end may not be answered by as many people as those at the beginning.)

Use standard question formats. People are more likely to answer in a consistent way and it is much easier to analyze the results. When possible, use concrete before abstract questions. For example, ask the the respondent to think about a specific event, rather than how such events usually occur.

Remember that asking questions is expensive, both in your time and that of the respondents. Ask as few questions as possible and make each one count. Do not ask overlapping questions: each response should reveal new information.

Calculate how long it will take for someone from your target audience to answer your questionnaire. If it is longer than 5-10 minutes, it is probably too long.

Always pilot test your questionnaire before sending it out to a large number of people. Ask two or three fellow designers to read and answer your questionnaire, as you watch. Then, ask them whether or not they understood the questions, if the questions seem relevant to the design problem. If you have access to your target users, pilot test it with them as well — you may find that you get a different impression

This will also give you a rough estimate of how long it will take to answer the questionnaire. Remember that people answering a questionnaire can always stop in the middle if it is too long, so make sure your questionnaire is as short and relevant as possible, and place questions that may not be answered at the end.

Example: Title for specific example

This needs graphics to show the different question types. Also show an example of how two questions can be turned into a single question.

Instead of:

1. How often do you upgrade your system:

   do you do x?   y   n

how much?

Also, try to avoid asking them to speculate.

Intead of: How often do you <performed activity>   <likert scale>

Try: When was the last time you <performed activity>?

Begin with directed, specific questions.

   Background: male/female, age, profession, etc.

   Comparative: Ranking, e.g. order items from 1-10

   Directed: Short answer

   Fact: True/false, multiple choice

Opinion:	Likert scale, e.g. 1-5, from very negative to very positive
Incident:	Fill in the blank

Place open-ended questions at the end. Consider letting users indicate their level of confidence about their answer or add a comment.

Create a Design Resource (after)

This should be about how to summarize the results.

Variation: Story questionnaire

Collecting stories about how users interact with technology is a key source of inspiration for new designs. However, standard questionnaire formats are usually more suited for obtaining facts (for design) or opinions (for marketing). However, you can create a story-based form of questionnaire, in which you look for typical or surprising stories from your interview or observation data, turn them into short vignettes, and present them to users. Ask if they have had a similar experience, and then provide space for them to tell their story of what happened to them. If they do not recognize the story, you can ask them for a different story.

Quotes

None so far

Annotated Glossary entry

Questionnares are ....

Selected references / Bibliography

Author (2000) Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla sed nunc enim. Vivamus eget nibh enim. Proin sed erat nulla, et pharetra massa.

Case Study: Title

Examples of regular questionnaires and story questionnaires.

Reuse
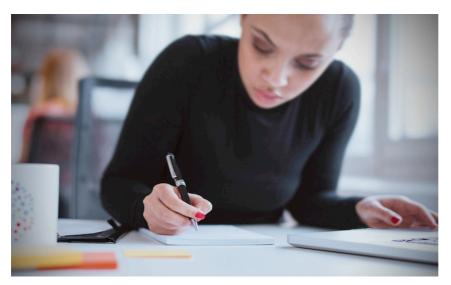
Usually, your first questionnaire .

☐ Pilot test the questionnaire first?
☐ Limit the number of questions?
☐ Ensure the questions do not overlap?
☐ Use standard question formats?
☐ Focus on getting facts, not opinions?
☐ Avoid asking 'obvious' questions?
☐ Use parallel structure?
☐ Maintain a consistent order?
☐ Consider what 'neutral' answers really mean?

Templates
Download the spreadsheet template or pdf at:
http://do-it/tpl/lorem

Illustrations / figures

Caption (Credits).